

## Question of FirstNet funding now moot, thanks to successful FCC spectrum auction

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Far surpassing estimated revenues, the Federal Communications Commission raised a staggering \$44.9 billion in a recent wireless spectrum auction with some of the proceeds earmarked for the development of a nationwide, interoperable network for first responders.

The AWS-3 auction – comprised of the 1695-1710 megahertz, 1755-1780 MHz and the 2155-2180 MHz bands – closed Jan. 29 and revenues even eclipsed the \$19.1 billion raised in the FCC's last major spectrum auction held in 2008.

This AWS-3 auction is the second of three designed to benefit the planned wireless broadband network for first responders, known as FirstNet. The program needs to garner \$7 billion from the auctions.

The FCC held the H Block auction of the 1915-1920 MHz and 1995-2000 MHz bands almost a year ago. The agency has scheduled the oft-delayed 600 MHz incentive auction for early 2016. This incentive auction would compensate broadcasters that voluntarily give up their airwaves, which would be resold to wireless carriers to meet an increasing demand for mobile broadband services.

In an ex parte filing posted by the FCC about a year ago, T-Mobile [predicted](#) that the H Block and AWS-3 would combined bring in \$8.9 billion to \$16.4 billion, meaning FirstNet would get the necessary funding even before the incentive auction.

The first two auctions, totaling \$46.4 billion, even beat T-Mobile's predictions. The [H Block auction](#), which concluded Feb. 27, 2014, raised more than \$1.5 billion.

"The results of this auction confirm the strong market demand for more spectrum," [said](#) FCC

Chairman Tom Wheeler in a statement. "We are confident there will continue to be strong demand for valuable low-band spectrum that will be made available in the incentive auction early next year."

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